

6 Support provided

The diverse nature of client needs is reflected in the considerable range of services SAAP agencies provide for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Support may involve the provision of supported accommodation and/or a range of support services generally provided on an ongoing basis to clients. Some 177,000 support periods were provided in Australia during 2001–02 (Table 2.1). Approximately 159,300 of these were closed support periods – that is, they finished before 30 June 2002 (Table 6.1; figure includes 1,300 closed support periods with missing data in the table [see note 1]). In this chapter, the length of support and accommodation is examined for closed support periods. In addition, an overview is presented on the types of services provided to clients by SAAP agencies across all support periods.

Length of support

Nationally, 38% of all closed support periods lasted for 1 day or less and a further 19% lasted from 2 to 7 days (Table 6.1). At the longer end of the spectrum, 15% of closed support periods lasted for 1 to 3 months and 12% lasted more than 3 months. This pattern was not consistent throughout Australia. In particular, in Queensland 56% of support periods lasted 1 day or less and only 6% were for more than 3 months. In contrast, in the Australian Capital Territory only 15% of support periods were for 1 day or less, while 20% lasted longer than 3 months. In Victorian agencies, clients seemed either to have very short periods of support or very long ones, with 38% of closed support periods being for 1 day or less and 19% being for more than 3 months. These differences across the States and Territories are reflected in the mean and median lengths of support. While the national median length of support was 4 days, Tasmania had the longest median, at 20 days, and Queensland the shortest, at 1 day. Because means are affected much more than medians by a small number of large values, the mean, or average, number of days of support is considerably longer than the median. The average length of support ranged from 23 days in Queensland and the Northern Territory to 76 days in the Australian Capital Territory. Overall, the average length of support was 44 days.

Patterns of support length also varied between client groups. As illustrated in Figure 6.1, clients with children tended to have longer periods of support than other clients, with couples with children having the longest periods of support among all client groups. Furthermore, unaccompanied females tended to have longer support periods than their male counterparts. More particularly, 54% of support periods for couples with children were for at least 4 weeks or more, while approximately half of the support periods for unaccompanied females under 25 years lasted 10 days or less (Table 6.2). The comparable figure for unaccompanied males under 25 years was 7 days. Both unaccompanied males and females aged 25 or over tended to have shorter support periods than other client groups: at least half of the support periods for these clients were for less than 1 and 2 days respectively.

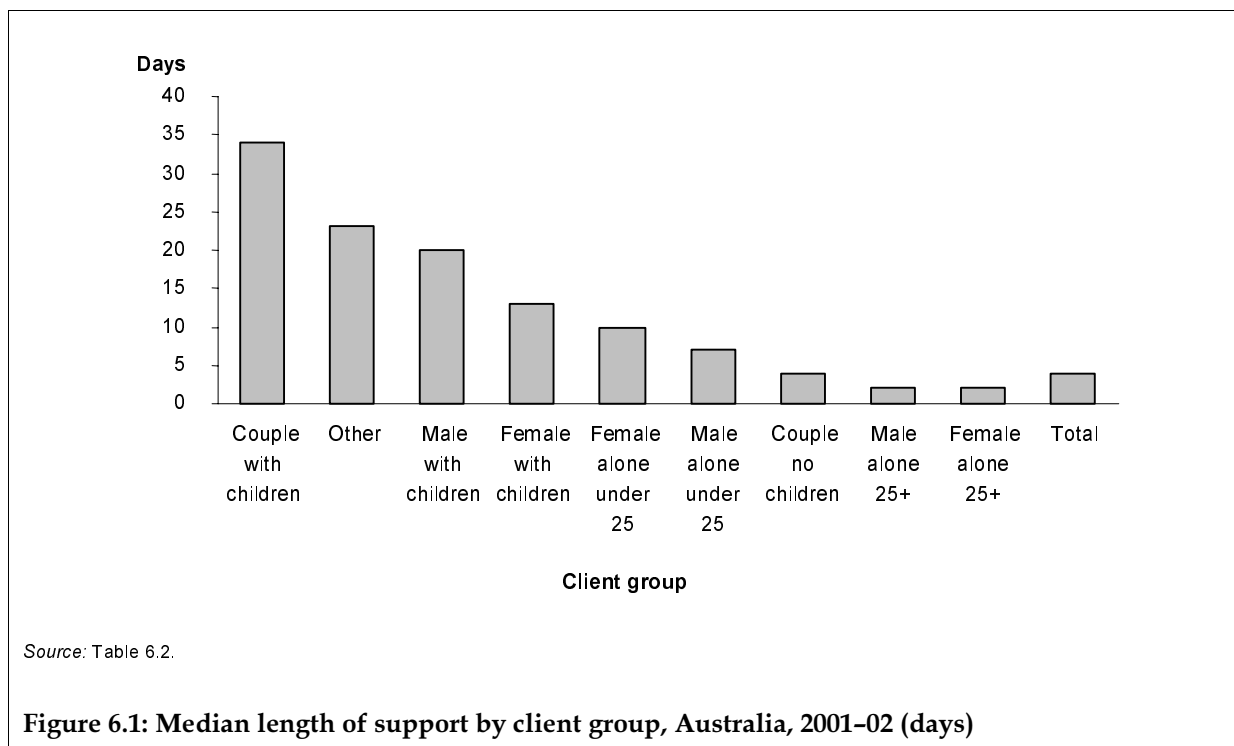


Figure 6.1: Median length of support by client group, Australia, 2001-02 (days)

Length of accommodation

Data were collected not only on the duration of support but also on the length of accommodation provided. In all, 4,700 closed support periods had accommodation that started and ended on the same date, while 93,400 involved accommodation of 1 day or longer (Table 6.3). In 34% of these latter support periods the accommodation was for 1 day only; in 27% it was for 2 to 7 days; in 20% clients were accommodated for 1 to 4 weeks; and in 12% accommodation lasted from 1 to 3 months. Accommodation lasted for more than 3 months in around 8% of support periods with accommodation of 1 day or longer. Overall, in more than half (52%) of all support periods where accommodation lasted at least 1 day, the accommodation lasted for 1 to 4 days.

The patterns for the duration of accommodation for the various client groups were somewhat similar to those for the duration of support (Table 6.3). People with children who were accommodated tended to have relatively long stays compared with other client groups. Thus, couples with children and males with children had relatively high median lengths of accommodation, at 69 and 21 days respectively (excluding same-day accommodation). However, females with children had median stays nearer to those of young unaccompanied clients: females with children had a median stay of 8 days compared with 6 or 7 days for single people aged under 25. Unlike total length of support, unaccompanied males and females had similar accommodation patterns, but again younger clients tended to stay longer than older clients. Unaccompanied females 25 years and over had the shortest median length of accommodation (2 days). They had the highest proportion of accommodation lasting only 1 day (46% of support periods).

Type of support

There are six broad types of services provided to SAAP clients. The three most often provided during 2001-02 were housing or accommodation services (in 77% of all support periods), general support or advocacy (in 75% of support periods), and basic support

services (in 68%) (Table 6.4). The main form of housing service provided was SAAP or CAP accommodation (in 64% of support periods), but assistance was also provided to help clients obtain or maintain other types of short-term accommodation or independent housing (in 23% and 19% of support periods respectively). Among the individual service types, a number were provided in more than 50% of support periods. Along with SAAP or CAP accommodation, these included advice or information, meals, and laundry or shower facilities (provided in 64%, 53% and 51% of support periods respectively).

Of the six broad service groups, specialist services were those least likely to be provided, being provided in 31% of support periods (Table 6.4). Health or medical services, and drug and alcohol support or intervention services, were the most commonly provided specialist services – provided in 18% and 16% of support periods respectively. In contrast, eight of the 11 identified specialist services were provided in 2% or fewer support periods each. No services were provided directly to the client by the agency in 2% of support periods. However, agencies may have arranged referrals for clients in these cases. The question of how agencies meet the needs of clients is examined further in Chapter 7.

In 2001–02 the pattern of service use differed between client groups. At the broad level, unaccompanied males aged 25 years or over were proportionately more often provided with accommodation services than other clients (in 87% of their support periods), while couples without children received these services relatively less frequently (in 68% of their support periods). Couples without children and people with children were more likely than others to use financial or employment services than other groups, while women, either with or without children, were relatively more often provided with counselling services. Unaccompanied people aged 25 years or more received both basic and specialist services relatively frequently.

At the finer level, the clients most often provided with SAAP or CAP accommodation were unaccompanied males 25 years or over: 80% of support periods for these clients involved SAAP or CAP accommodation. In contrast, couples without children received SAAP or CAP accommodation in only 37% of their support periods. Unaccompanied men 25 years or over were also the most frequent recipients of meals (in 74% of their support periods), laundry or shower facilities (73%), retrieval, storage or removal of belongings (45%) and drug or alcohol support (26%). Men in this group, along with younger unaccompanied males, were also provided with psychiatric services (in 3% and 2% of cases respectively) more often than other client groups. At the same time, older unaccompanied males were less likely than other clients to receive assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing (in 11% of their support periods), advocacy and liaison on their behalf by the agency (16%) and most types of counselling.

Unaccompanied males and females under the age of 25 years were proportionately more often provided with living skills or personal development assistance than other clients (in 27% and 30% of their support periods respectively) (Table 6.4). On the other hand, female clients presenting either with or without children were more likely than others to receive emotional support or other counselling (in at least 50% or more of their support periods), while unaccompanied females aged 25 years and over and females with children were much more likely than other groups to receive domestic violence counselling – in 26% and 40% of their support periods respectively. Further, females with children and unaccompanied females 25 years and over more often received assistance with legal issues and court support than any other client group (21% and 16% of support periods respectively). Overall, three client groups – couples with no children, couples with children and males with children – were relatively more likely than other groups to have no services provided directly by the

agency: in 4% of support periods for each of these groups. With the exception of transport, couples with children were also provided with basic support services in far fewer support periods compared to all other client groups (meals 11%, laundry and shower facilities 9% and recreation 7%).

6.1 Tables

Table 6.1: SAAP closed support periods: length of support by State and Territory, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent)

Length of support	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total	
									%	Number
Less than 1 day	12.8	32.9	9.8	7.8	17.9	7.6	1.7	5.1	16.5	26,000
1 day	21.3	4.7	46.0	22.0	9.7	8.3	13.5	18.5	21.8	34,500
2 days	6.1	1.8	4.0	13.4	4.6	4.2	5.7	11.3	5.1	8,000
3 days	5.6	1.7	3.0	9.7	3.9	3.5	5.3	9.4	4.2	6,700
4 days	3.5	1.2	2.2	4.6	3.2	3.0	3.3	5.8	2.7	4,300
5 days	3.0	0.9	1.8	2.9	2.5	2.6	2.3	4.5	2.2	3,400
6 days	2.8	1.1	1.8	2.6	2.5	2.8	3.1	2.8	2.1	3,300
7 days	2.6	1.5	1.8	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.9	3.0	2.2	3,500
>1-2 weeks	9.5	5.7	7.2	8.6	9.9	10.8	11.6	10.6	8.0	12,700
>2-4 weeks	9.4	8.0	6.4	7.4	10.1	10.2	12.4	8.8	8.2	13,000
>4-13 weeks	13.2	22.0	10.2	10.7	16.1	28.1	18.3	14.2	15.2	24,100
>13-26 weeks	4.8	9.7	3.1	3.8	7.8	8.5	9.3	4.1	5.9	9,300
>26-52 weeks	3.0	5.3	1.6	2.0	5.6	5.4	6.2	1.4	3.4	5,400
>52 weeks	2.4	3.5	1.0	1.7	3.7	2.2	4.1	0.5	2.3	3,700
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	27.2	24.8	24.6	8.2	7.6	3.2	1.5	2.9	100.0	..
Total (number)	43,000	39,100	38,900	13,000	12,100	5,000	2,300	4,500	..	158,000
Mean length (days)	42	63	23	32	64	56	76	23	..	44
Median length (days)	5	13	1	3	9	20	15	4	..	4

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 1,348.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 6.2: SAAP closed support periods: length of support by client group, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent)

Length of support	Male alone under 25	Male alone 25+	Female alone under 25	Female alone 25+	Couple no children	Couple with children	Male with children	Female with children	Other	Total	
										%	Number
Less than 1 day	16.3	14.3	16.8	19.3	31.6	19.9	22.4	14.3	16.1	16.3	25,400
1 day	16.2	32.2	13.1	27.4	14.6	4.5	5.7	12.0	8.9	21.6	33,700
2 days	5.3	5.8	4.9	5.2	2.0	2.1	2.2	4.9	5.7	5.1	8,000
3 days	5.0	5.2	3.9	4.1	1.6	1.6	1.5	4.0	3.2	4.4	6,800
4 days	2.7	3.0	2.6	2.8	1.2	1.6	1.9	2.7	1.7	2.7	4,200
5 days	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.2	1.0	0.7	1.6	2.1	1.0	2.1	3,300
6 days	2.2	2.4	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.2	1.4	2.0	1.4	2.1	3,200
7 days	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.8	2.2	1.6	2.2	3,400
>1-2 weeks	8.9	9.0	7.8	6.2	5.6	5.2	6.9	7.6	5.7	7.9	12,300
>2-4 weeks	9.1	7.5	10.5	6.8	7.1	8.3	10.2	8.8	9.0	8.3	12,900
>4-13 weeks	16.7	10.2	19.0	13.1	17.9	23.2	23.6	20.0	26.0	15.2	23,700
>13-26 weeks	6.1	2.9	7.7	4.9	7.9	15.0	11.2	9.8	9.0	6.1	9,500
>26-52 weeks	4.0	1.6	4.4	2.5	4.1	9.6	6.4	5.9	6.0	3.6	5,500
>52 weeks	2.6	1.4	3.3	1.9	2.1	5.7	3.2	3.4	4.4	2.4	3,800
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	12.9	33.9	11.7	15.1	2.6	2.7	0.9	19.3	0.8	100.0	..
Total (number)	20,200	52,800	18,200	23,500	4,000	4,100	1,500	30,100	1,300	..	155,700
Mean length (days)	48	28	58	35	44	100	65	62	73	..	45
Median length (days)	7	2	10	2	4	34	20	13	23	..	4

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 4,335.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 6.3: SAAP closed support periods in which clients were accommodated: total length of accommodation by client group, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent)

Length of accommodation	Male alone under 25	Male alone 25+	Female alone under 25	Female alone 25+	Couple no children	Couple with children	Male with children	Female with children	Other	Total	
										%	Number
1 day	25.0	41.5	22.5	45.8	40.6	6.5	12.1	19.3	18.3	33.6	31,400
2 days	7.8	7.2	8.2	7.9	4.2	3.7	3.7	8.3	12.5	7.6	7,100
3 days	7.2	6.4	6.1	6.2	3.3	2.6	4.5	6.6	6.6	6.4	5,900
4 days	4.1	3.7	4.2	4.1	2.3	1.8	2.0	4.3	3.6	3.9	3,600
5 days	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.5	2.2	0.8	3.0	3.4	1.8	3.1	2,900
6 days	3.5	3.0	3.4	2.2	3.3	2.3	2.6	3.2	2.8	3.0	2,800
7 days	3.4	2.8	3.1	2.7	4.6	1.8	4.4	3.4	3.0	3.0	2,800
>1-2 weeks	12.4	11.0	11.0	8.3	6.2	5.1	10.4	10.8	7.6	10.6	9,900
>2-4 weeks	11.5	8.6	11.0	6.7	8.2	9.3	12.1	10.2	7.6	9.2	8,600
>4-13 weeks	13.6	8.9	16.6	8.3	12.8	25.5	22.3	16.9	18.4	11.9	11,100
>13-26 weeks	4.1	2.2	5.0	2.3	5.9	22.1	13.3	7.4	6.6	4.0	3,800
>26-52 weeks	2.5	1.1	3.2	1.1	4.8	12.6	7.5	4.2	6.3	2.3	2,100
>52 weeks	1.6	0.8	2.5	0.9	1.7	5.9	2.1	2.0	4.9	1.4	1,300
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Total (%)	13.2	42.7	9.9	14.1	1.3	1.6	0.5	16.0	0.5	100.0	..
Total (number)	12,300	39,900	9,300	13,200	1,200	1,500	500	15,000	500	..	93,400
Mean length (days)	33	21	43	20	37	114	63	45	70	..	31
Median length (days)	6	3	7	2	4	69	21	8	8	..	4
All accommodation starting and ending on the same date (number)	500	2,000	500	800	100	100	<50	700	<50	..	4,700

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 3,503.
2. Clients were able to be accommodated on more than one occasion in a support period.
3. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 6.4: SAAP support periods: services provided to clients, by client group, Australia, 2001–02 (per cent)

Type of service	Male alone under 25	Male alone 25+	Female alone under 25	Female alone 25+	Couple no children	Couple with children	Male with children	Female with children	Other	Total
Housing/accommodation	77.7	87.1	69.7	69.9	67.7	71.1	69.0	70.3	65.3	76.6
SAAP/CAP accommodation	65.1	79.9	54.7	60.2	36.5	46.2	42.3	54.7	45.7	64.2
Assistance to obtain/maintain short-term accommodation	22.0	27.7	18.4	23.6	32.2	20.9	21.9	15.5	14.2	22.5
Assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing	18.2	11.0	21.6	14.3	30.7	40.0	33.5	28.5	28.4	19.0
Financial/employment	39.6	38.9	39.5	43.7	52.0	50.9	46.5	43.1	36.3	41.3
Assistance to obtain/maintain government payment	15.1	18.2	15.3	20.5	17.6	10.1	9.6	14.3	12.6	16.6
Employment/training assistance	8.2	1.7	8.1	1.8	3.0	4.3	3.6	2.2	5.4	3.6
Financial assistance/material aid	25.7	24.6	26.4	29.6	37.2	43.1	38.4	34.9	28.3	28.8
Financial counselling	8.8	5.6	8.9	5.5	9.1	17.5	12.2	10.3	7.9	7.9
Counselling	39.7	36.7	57.5	66.2	40.2	43.8	43.3	70.5	49.8	51.2
Incest/sexual assault	1.0	0.3	3.3	2.9	0.8	1.7	1.2	3.2	1.7	1.8
Domestic violence	1.6	0.6	10.0	26.1	3.3	6.3	2.7	40.1	13.6	13.9
Family/relationship	12.2	8.2	20.9	16.5	10.8	17.3	14.8	23.0	19.2	14.9
Emotional/other	35.4	30.7	51.9	56.7	35.9	39.5	39.8	61.9	42.9	44.5
Assistance with problem gambling	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.6	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.6
General support/advocacy	76.1	72.0	77.2	75.6	73.8	75.8	75.7	79.2	67.1	75.3
Living skills/personal development	27.4	10.6	30.0	9.7	9.6	10.8	10.1	10.9	16.1	15.1
Assistance with legal issues/court support	7.7	7.0	8.8	16.3	5.5	7.8	9.3	20.6	6.7	11.4
Advice/information	64.6	57.7	66.2	65.2	67.0	68.2	66.0	69.5	58.5	63.7
Retrieval/storage/removal of belongings	26.9	45.4	19.1	25.6	19.6	11.7	12.0	12.9	14.5	28.1
Advocacy/liaison on behalf of client	30.3	15.7	37.8	32.1	36.2	48.5	43.1	48.5	36.8	31.2
Brokerage services	5.5	2.1	6.4	3.3	8.4	8.9	9.1	5.7	4.0	4.4
Specialist services	24.1	35.7	27.2	39.4	24.9	17.9	14.1	28.3	27.8	31.1
Psychological services	1.1	0.9	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.6	1.0	1.7	1.0
Psychiatric services	2.3	3.4	1.1	1.8	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.0	2.0
Pregnancy support	0.1	0	4.2	1.1	3.3	4.2	0.3	3.6	5.2	1.6
Family planning support	0.3	0.1	2.2	0.4	1.4	1.9	0.2	1.6	1.7	0.8
Drug/alcohol support or intervention	13.8	25.7	9.6	18.9	15.7	4.3	6.5	3.8	7.6	15.6
Physical disability services	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Intellectual disability services	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.2
Culturally appropriate support	7.1	16.0	8.3	25.5	12.2	5.3	3.2	14.3	9.7	14.4
Interpreter services	0.4	0.3	0.6	2.0	0.7	1.5	0.6	2.7	2.4	1.1
Assistance with immigration issues	0.3	0.1	0.6	1.3	0.5	0.9	0.2	1.2	1.5	0.6
Health/medical services	14.6	26.0	13.9	22.0	16.2	6.6	7.1	10.8	7.6	18.3
Basic support and services n.e.s.	68.7	82.7	62.2	68.0	44.2	37.5	39.8	56.7	47.3	67.9
Meals	55.5	74.2	44.5	53.9	26.2	11.3	18.6	34.5	23.7	53.1
Laundry/shower facilities	52.2	73.0	40.3	53.1	22.8	8.8	17.2	33.7	23.7	51.4
Recreation	35.9	34.5	29.8	24.5	14.5	6.8	11.8	19.5	17.6	27.9
Transport	32.4	14.4	40.7	31.5	17.1	25.6	20.5	42.6	29.0	28.7
Other	12.4	13.1	10.6	10.6	8.2	7.5	7.5	10.1	9.3	11.4
No services provided directly	2.4	1.1	2.5	1.4	3.5	3.6	3.9	1.6	3.3	1.8
Total (number)	22,000	55,700	20,700	24,900	4,400	5,000	1,700	34,000	1,500	169,900

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 7,018 (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
2. Clients were able to receive multiple services, so percentages do not total 100.
3. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

